

Got what it takes to fight wildfires? Delaware Forest Service seeks new trainees



In 2016, Delaware's wildfire crew battled the 12,000-acre Whit Fire in Wyoming just east of Yellowstone National Park, working with more than 600 personnel to construct fire lines, patrol the edge, and protect structures. Interested applicants can sign up for classes starting Oct. 21 at the Delaware State Fire School in Dover.

(DOVER, Del.) – The [Delaware Forest Service](#) is seeking new recruits for its wildfire training classes at the [Delaware State Fire School](#) ([1461 Chestnut Grove Road, Dover, DE 19904](#)). No experience is needed. Candidates should be over 18, physically fit, and motivated to learn. Trainees should also be willing to travel for at least two weeks (usually during the summer) for out-of-state fire assignments. Classes can help earn “red-card” certification from the [National Wildfire Coordinating Group](#) to serve on Delaware's

wildfire crew. This year, Delaware dispatched a crew that [battled blazes in the Rocky Mountain region of western Colorado](#).

This year's training will take place over two separate weekends: The first session will be on October 21 and 22 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day (lunch included). The second session will be on November 4 and 5 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day (lunch included). Each session costs \$50. Applicants should register by **October 16** by contacting the Delaware State Fire School at (302) 739-4773 or email: fire.school@delaware.gov. Website: statefireschool.delaware.gov Those with no prior experience can contact Kyle Hoyd, Delaware's assistant state forester, at (302) 698-4548 or kyle.hoyd@delaware.gov to get more information.

Trainees will complete the following courses on two separate weekend sessions. In addition, students **must** complete [ICS-100 \(available online\)](#) before classes begin.

- Session 1: [S-190 \(Intro to Wildland Fire Behavior\)](#) and [S-130 \(Firefighter Training\)](#) – October 21 and 22 (Saturday and Sunday) – 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day (lunch included)
- Session 2: [S-130 \(Firefighter Training\)](#) – November 4 and 5 (Saturday and Sunday) – 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day (lunch included)

Both S-190 and S-130 are required for prospective firefighters to attain “red-card” certification from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), the lead agency for wildfire training in the United States. In addition to the basic coursework, candidates must also complete an arduous “work capacity” or “pack test,” which involves carrying a 45-pound pack over a three-mile course in less than 45 minutes.

The capstone of the Delaware Forest Service's annual wildfire

training is its annual “Fire Camp” at Redden State Forest in Georgetown, Sussex County. Held in April, the intensive one-day seminar includes hands-on training across a range of wildland firefighting tools and strategies, culminating in a “live-burn” exercise designed to simulate conditions on an actual fire assignment.

The need for qualified personnel is as important as ever: this summer, wildfires pushed the National Preparedness Level to its maximum of 5 on a 5-point scale. Delaware has been mobilizing crews and individual resources to serve on out-of-state assignment since the late-1990s. Delaware firefighters have traveled to fires in many states: Alaska, California, Georgia, Idaho, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. The First State has also sent personnel to aid in national or regional emergencies, such as hurricane relief efforts in Florida in 2004 and New York in 2011. Trained and dispatched by the Delaware Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service, wildfire crews are comprised of men and women of varying ages and backgrounds who represent a mix of public agencies, nonprofit groups, volunteer fire companies, and private citizens—all with an interest in firefighting and a desire to help their communities.

Despite its small size, Delaware has earned an outstanding reputation on the national firefighting scene and was [honored by Governor Carney at the Delaware State Fair in July](#).

Delaware Wildfire Crew – In the News: (2017)

July 12 – *The News Journal* – [Delaware volunteers help contain Western wildfires](#)

July 12 – *Cape Gazette* – [Delaware crew battles 300-acre blaze in Colorado](#)

July 27 – *Delaware Public Media* – [90 years of Delaware Forest Service celebrated with return of wildfire crew](#)

